

THE JACOBS REPORT

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GRANHOLM UNVEILS MICHIGAN 401K

Goal: Help Small Business Employees, Self-Employed Save for Retirement

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm unveiled her plan to make an affordable retirement savings program available to small business workers and the self-employed across Michigan. Granholm first announced the state's commitment to developing this program, known as MI Retirement, in her 2006 State of the State address.

"MI Retirement can make a financially secure future a reality for tens of thousands of workers across Michigan," Granholm said. "This program gives small business a new tool to recruit and retain employees and gives employees an easy way to save for retirement."

MI Retirement will make a savings plan similar to a 401K available to small businesses in Michigan at little or no cost. The program eliminates many of the barriers, including administrative oversight and cost, that prevent small businesses from providing a retirement plan for their employees. Currently, just 30 percent of small businesses with fewer than 25 employees offer retirement plans.

Granholm said research clearly indicates that when retirement savings plans are available, employees take advantage of them. Eight of ten employees in businesses that offer retirement plans are saving for retirement, while just four in ten will seek out individual savings plans if one is not available through work.

"The benefits of increased savings are clear," said Granholm. "Workers can enjoy a higher quality of life in retirement, and the demand for state services, including health care and social services, decline."

Once MI Retirement is up and running, the state will turn over operations to a private or nonprofit pension management company.

The legislation creating the MI Retirement program is sponsored by Senator Buzz Thomas (D-Detroit) and Representative Steve Bieda (D-Warren).

TWO SIDES TO DRUG IMMUNITY REPEAL

Patients Testify to Pros and Cons

The House Tort Reform Committee took testimony on House Bill 5527, a bill that would end immunity for drug companies in this state.

Currently, drug companies are immune from lawsuits over medications approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration unless the plaintiff can demonstrate fraud on the part of the company obtaining that approval. Michigan is the only state that offers drug companies such protections.

Most of the testimony was given in support of the bill. One young woman expressed doubts that she'll be alive this Christmas because of the nasty side effects a federally approved drug left her with. Diagnosed

with Breast Cancer at age 31, she was given an intravenous drug mix during treatment by her physician that led to a jaw infection. Ultimately, the jaw infection led to parts of her jaw being removed and the removal of several teeth. Those treatments also halted for 10 months the chemotherapy that she was receiving.

“I have no quality of life,” she explained. “I’m on oxygen 24 hours a day. I’ll be lucky to live until Christmas. I feel like I’ve been given a death sentence because of this medication.”

Then came the story of another woman who is living in chronic pain because the one medicine that helped her, Vioxx, was taken off the shelves because someone else who took it later suffered strokes.

She testified that increased risk of cardiac disease was well known when she began taking Vioxx within weeks of its release.

“My physician told me there was a potential for cardio vascular disease,” she said. “It was known. I had heart exams and I had blood work. There is no such thing as a safe drug. They all have adverse side affects.”

She testified that in the end, it’s up to the patient to work with the physician and determine if the risks are worth it. She is now living with more pain than she had when she took Vioxx, which is now sold on the black market due to high demand.

This week’s hearing was for testimony only.

“This bill would simply put pharmaceutical manufacturers on the same level as all other manufacturers,” said Rep. Gaffney (R-Grosse Pointe Farms), the bill sponsor. Gaffney admitted that he’s taken a hit from other Republicans for deciding to introduce the bill in the first place.

FRESH STRATEGY PROMOTES MICHIGAN

Campaign Launches in Ohio, Southern Ontario and Wisconsin

On Monday, June 19 new television commercials will promote the ‘Pure Michigan’ tourism campaign in Cincinnati, Milwaukee and Southern Ontario, Canada. These new ads are part of a 3 million dollar Michigan summer promotion in these markets. From pristine lakeshores to urban destinations, the new advertising will promote the entire State of Michigan as a vacation destination. Last year visitors spent \$17.5 billion, generating \$971 million in state taxes, and accounting for 193,000 jobs statewide, making tourism a vital industry in Michigan.

“Pure Michigan is a fresh and invigorating campaign that promotes Michigan’s natural assets including 3,200 miles of fresh water shoreline and 11,000 inland lakes and streams,” said Travel Michigan Vice President George Zimmermann. “The campaign also features many attractions within the state including The Henry Ford, The Detroit Institute of Arts, Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, The Detroit Zoo, Mackinac Island, and Michigan’s world-class golf.”

The Birmingham, Michigan office of McCann Erickson developed the strategy and creative for the Pure Michigan campaign. McCann’s Chief Creative Officer Dave Moore explains their approach: “The campaign is intended to entice out-of-state travelers from neighboring states about one place that still feels magic, mythic, authentic, untamed, unspoiled, uncompromised, timeless and true. It’s pure Michigan. We wanted to communicate to consumers what makes Michigan special, and identify experiences you get here that you can’t get anywhere else.”

Prior to the full development of the ad campaign, Travel Michigan tested the Pure Michigan positioning and creative samples via an online consumer panel in the out-of-state markets of Cincinnati, Milwaukee, and Southern Ontario, Canada. "Consumer acceptance of the messaging was excellent. After viewing the advertising concepts, 50–60 percent stated the ads would motivate them to contact Michigan for more information to plan a Michigan vacation," said Zimmermann.

Michigan native and television personality Tim Allen voiced two radio and three television commercials that promote golf, water related vacations and a trail-themed spot that promotes hiking, beach strolls and museum visits. Currently under production is an additional radio ad that features urban dining and nightlife. Four print and three outdoor billboards focus on golf, waterfalls and lakes. All ads carry the tag line: Pure Michigan – Your trip begins at michigan.org. Michigan.org, Travel Michigan's Internet gateway to travel information, features more than 11,000 attractions, events, hotels, resorts, restaurants and other tourism-related businesses.

McCann Erickson's Birmingham, Michigan office creates advertising and integrated marketing communications programs for Buick Motor Division; General Motors Corporation (Corporate Advertising); Delphi; Honeywell Consumer Product Group's Prestone, FRAM and Autolite units; Detroit Medical Center; Travel Michigan; and a variety of other clients. McCann Worldgroup is the world's largest multinational advertising agency system, with operations in 131 countries. It is part of the Interpublic Group of Companies, Inc. (NYSE: IPG). To find out more about McCann Erickson, visit its Web site at www.mccann.com.

Travel Michigan, a division of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, is the State of Michigan's official agency for the promotion of tourism. Travel Michigan markets the state's tourism industry and provides valuable visitor information services. For more information on traveling in the State of Michigan, visit the official travel Web site at michigan.org, or call (888) 78-GREAT.

All Michigan legislation can be tracked at <http://www.legislature.michigan.gov/>.

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State Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14th Senate District, which includes Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Franklin, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Families & Human Services Committee and the Economic Development, Small Business & Regulatory Reform Committee. She also serves on the Government Operations and Health Policy Committees.

Constituents of the 14th District may contact Senator Jacobs at sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov or toll-free at 1-888-937-4453.

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